

The Gospel Messenger.

"It was needful to write unto you, and exhort you, that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." *Jude 3.*

"I will take no man's liberty of judging from him; neither shall any man take mine from me."

Chillingworth.

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For the Gospel Messenger.

REFLECTIONS ON THE SEASON.

"How beauteous are their feet
Who stand on Zion's hill;
Who bring salvation on their tongues,
And words of peace reveal."

Hymn on the Epiphany.

IN the contemplation of Seasons which have passed, events crowd upon the mind, and excite mingled emotions of pain and pleasure; not unlike those indulged in the recollection of departed friends. The analogy improves, when we confess that our feelings of melancholy predominate, because, as we are always inclined to reproach ourselves, for not sufficiently estimating their exemplary virtues while living, so we lament that we have not sufficiently profited by that time, which now is gone for ever.

As the correction of error, however, is an important step towards improvement in science, we shall, in like manner, benefit by a retrospective view of our moral and spiritual course. Years, months, and days roll on, and the weary pilgrim is still permitted to look back on life's rugged path with acquired experience, resolutely to pursue the tenor of his way, and, cheered by evangelic light, to reach in safety, and in hope, the "narrow verge."

The seasons of the year afford a most instructive lesson to the reflecting mind. How strikingly do spring, summer, autumn and winter, allegorize the periods of our existence. *Spring*, the emblem of infancy and innocence, with its tender shoot and bud. *Summer*, manhood, with faculties matured and ripened fruits. *Aut-*

umn, the consummation of all our projects, when the fields are ready for the sickle. In *Winter*, the harvest is gathered in, the fruits are stored, the leaves have fallen, and dreariness and gloom cover the face of nature. Man now bends under the infirmities of age, and waits his final doom. But how vastly different are his prospects! Here, indeed, is beheld the fulness of Divine love. That man sinks not into despondency, or the dread of annihilation; revelation pours in upon the heavy laden, a stream of celestial light. The natural world shall again be visited by spring; but to be succeeded by its winter. The resurrection of man shall be to a life of never ending peace, and joy, and immortality.

Eighteen centuries have passed, since the amazing truth was confirmed that, *as at this time*, the Saviour assumed a mortal nature, as most familiar to our capacity, and disclosed to a benighted world, the wondrous scheme of salvation, which brought life and immortality to light.

Season of joy! Let us hail with gratitude its annual return. To cherish the remembrance of this stupendous love to man, accords with the dictates of piety; to cultivate this Divine knowledge, is not only our duty, but the most profitable employment of our time; for, as the laws which govern the vegetable and mineral kingdoms, are incomprehensible without philosophy, and anatomy a mass of dead matter, without physiology, so is the end and being of man, without the living gospel of the Son of God.

How humiliating is the reflection

on human nature, in the abstract! In infancy, we behold mankind almost destitute of those characteristics which the lower order of animals possess; helpless, unconscious of danger, and for several months deprived of locomotive power! But, advancing in growth, the mind expands with those faculties which are designed by their Great Author, to exalt man above the works of this lower creation. Power, riches, and honours await him; but alas! how unavailing. He finds himself exposed to innumerable evils, which can neither be foreseen, nor prevented. Sorrows, cares, and troubles, assail him on every side. Gloomy and desponding, he attains to old age, and, weary, wishes to be at rest. His prospect beyond the grave is a wide wilderness of doubt, darkness and uncertainty; nor can any condition of circumstances increase his hopes, or dispel his disquietude and fear.

The Christian Religion is alone capable of conveying comfort to his soul, and dispersing those clouds of darkness which obstruct his views and obscure his hopes; which can impart fortitude under all his trials and afflictions; give him patience under disappointment; and, in short, which can render his life happy, and its termination peaceful.

Let us hear the acknowledgment of a distinguished follower of Muhammed. In the most splendid era of Arabian magnificence, the reign of Abdalrahman, as it was exhibited at the palaces of Cordova and Zehra, the following authentic memorial, says the historian,* was found in the closet of the Caliph, after his decease, in his own hand-writing:

"I have reigned fifty years, beloved by my subjects, dreaded by my enemies, and esteemed by my allies. Riches, honours, power, and pleasures have awaited my call; nor does any earthly blessing appear to have been wanting to complete my felicity. In

this situation, and during this long period, I have not been able to enumerate more than *fourteen days* which have passed without being embittered with trouble and uneasiness. O man! learn to make a just estimate of this world, and of the pleasure it affords."

The gospel revelation provides the only remedy for all human vicissitudes and troubles. It instils into the human heart the only true philosophy, and is alone capable of affording consolation, and inspiring hope in this probationary state. The Religion of Jesus Christ is that system we ought to have desired most, had it been left to our choice; because it best accords with our interests and our wants in every season, and in every condition of life; which discloses to the longing and enraptured sight of the believer, the heavenly Canaan, the new Jerusalem, the place of our eternal rest; while it animates and tranquillizes the soul, promotes uninterrupted cheerfulness, and humble submission to the Divine will.

PHILANTHROPOS.

For the Gospel Messenger.

MAN NOT AUTHORIZED TO MAKE A RELIGION OF HIS OWN.

It was declared by the great Apostle of the Gentiles, to the Corinthian converts, that "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."* This is an humbling passage to the pride and self-conceit of man. All right, as well as all excuse, to form a religion for ourselves, is taken away by divine revelation. As God is the sole object of religious worship, so he, only, can be the author of true religion; and it does not consist with the majesty of the uncreated Godhead, to permit us to exercise our judgment upon a sub-

* Bigland's History of Spain.

* 1 Cor. iii. 11.

ject, on which he has been pleased to decide. All that is required of us is, to receive his revelation with thankfulness, and to live in obedience to his will. He has been graciously pleased to reveal such a religion as best comports with his glory, and the happiness of his rational creatures; and from them to whom his revelation is made known, he exacts the most rigid obedience. He will not permit us to devise ways of righteousness of our own, and to follow those which are most agreeable to our passions or our conceits. Jesus Christ alone is "the way, the truth and the life, and no man cometh unto the Father, but by him."* "He that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."† If we will not consent to be led to heaven by this Divine Teacher, and to be received through his intercession and grace; if we will not submit to be saved upon the terms of the gospel, we shall not be saved at all. By him, and through him, alone, can we hope for mercy and salvation; "for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved,"‡ but the name of Jesus Christ;§ "because it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."¶ Since this is the irreversible decree of God, does it not concern us very materially, to ascertain whether we have chosen the way which the Saviour has consecrated with his blood? Whether we have embraced the religion which he came down from heaven to reveal to our sinful race? Whether we have accepted the Son of God as the Saviour of the world, and are willing to live in conformity with his gospel, be saved by "his bitter cross and passion," and plead his merits alone for our justification at the throne of God? If we can lay no

other foundation than is laid in Jesus Christ, and him crucified, have we laid that foundation, and built our faith, and our hopes* upon that foundation alone? Or are we endeavouring to build without this foundation, and to raise a superstructure which will not stand in that day, when "every man's work shall be made manifest: when it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is?"† Unless we "build upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone,"‡ the building which we may raise will be like a house built upon the sand, which will be overthrown by the wind and the rain.§ We must build upon the Rock of Ages, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."¶ Then we shall be safe against all the storms and tempests of the moral world, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against us.¶

Can it be believed, that, when God has revealed the plan of man's redemption by the blood of the cross, that it is not the most perfect which unerring wisdom could devise? When the infinite wisdom of God has declared, what is essentially necessary for our salvation, can we, for one moment, believe it to be a matter of perfect indifference in the divine mind, whether we receive this plan of salvation or not? It cannot be. Whoever, therefore, rejects this plan, deliberately insults his God, and ruins his own soul.

However highly we may appreciate our moral attainments and practice, and think ourselves more righteous than our neighbour, what is the language of the book of God? "There is none righteous, no not one.—There is none that doeth good, no not one."*** "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not

* John xiv. 6.

† Mark xvi. 16.

‡ Acts iv. 12.

§ 1 Tim. i. 15.

* 1 Tim. i. 1.

† 1 Cor. iii. 13.

‡ Eph. ii. 20.

§ Matt. vii. 26, 27.

¶ Heb. xiii. 8.

* Matt. xvi. 18.

** Rom. iii. 10, 12.

in us; but if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* God, then, considers all men as sinners; and as sinners, we must stand or fall upon the great doctrine of redemption through the blood of Christ. "He is the propitiation for our sins;"† and if we think that we can do without his propitiation, "we deceive ourselves." If we depend upon our own good works; upon our observance of the moral law, and the ordinary decencies of conduct in society, for our acceptance with God, and not upon the propitiatory sacrifice which he has appointed, we are ruined. Faith in Christ is the tree on which God benignantly smiles, and good works, in obedience to the gospel, are the fruit which it naturally produces. Good works, proceeding from religious motives, are the necessary and never failing attendants upon a living faith in Christ, as the Saviour of the world. And these works have no respect to the order of society, or the condition of men. They can be performed by the poor as well as the rich, and are equally expected from the master and the slave. St. Paul calls them "the fruit of the spirit," because they proceed from a heart which has been changed or purified by the grace or spirit of God, and are the witnesses of the conversion of the soul to a crucified Redeemer. The very names by which they are known in the word of God, declare their character and their source. They are, "Love" to God and man: "Joy" in the conviction of God's merciful providence over them that love him: "Peace," "which passeth all understanding," and which speaks comfort to the troubled soul: "Long suffering;" bearing with others, as "God for Christ's sake bears with us;" "Gentleness," in our intercourse with our fellow-men: "Goodness;" or an ardent desire to do good to all who

stand in need of our assistance or christian care: "Faith" in the Redeemer of our souls; taking him for our example in every thing that is holy and good: "Meekness" of soul, which keeps the passions in subjection to religion and duty: and "Temperance"‡ in the indulgence of sensual gratifications, "so using the world as not to abuse it." These are the effects of religious faith in Christ, and a truly religious man can no more be without these evidences of his faith, than he can live in open profligacy and sin, and, at the same time, be a sincere and penitent Christian.

Under these convictions, the humble, pious Christian, who is endeavouring to "work out his salvation with fear and trembling,"§ must weep over the delusion of those unhappy persons, who are striving to find out a road for themselves, and refuse to travel by that prescribed by divine appointment. What reader of the Bible can forget the terrors of that day, "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."¶ God will not be mocked; nor will he suffer his laws to be trampled upon with impunity. Punishment will as assuredly follow disobedience and sin, as light the rising of the sun. The means of grace have been amply furnished by our beneficent Creator; and if we refuse to use them for our good, the consequences must fall upon our own head. Every christian land abounds with opportunities of hearing, and reading, and learning our duty to God, and knowing what his laws prescribe as necessary for our salvation. If we sin, therefore, we do not sin ignorantly. We know, or we might know, what God requires of us; but we refuse to obey him; and prefer our own

* 1 John i. 8, 9.

† ii. 2.

* Gal. v. 22, 23.

† Phil. ii. 12.

‡ 2 Thess. i. 7, 8.

counsel to infinite wisdom. What says an Apostle to such persons as these: "If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain, fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall ye be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people."^a

Let them who are wise, and who are desirous of being "wise unto salvation," and who think it a very serious thing to fall under the wrath of a justly offended God, ponder upon these things. Let them remember what the same Apostle says, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."[†]

C. F.

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For the Gospel Messenger.

ON THE MINISTRY AS A DIVINE INSTITUTION.

No. VIII.

CHAPTER IV. *continued.*

MINISTRY UNDER THE GOSPEL.

THE ordination of Deacons is next to be considered. It is recorded by St. Luke, that the Grecian proselytes complained, that in the distribution of alms, the Hebrew converts were more favoured than they. To remove every source of jealousy, or dissatisfaction, in the Church, the Apostles ordained the third order of the ministry.

"Look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom *we*,"^a the Apostles, "may appoint over this business." Seven persons were accordingly selected by the people, "whom they set before the Apostles; and when they had prayed, they," the Apostles, "laid their hands on them."^a This solemn appointment to the ministerial office, has been called, by those who deny an imparity in the ministry, a mere designation to a secular office; a mere appointment of persons to dispense alms to the poor. But we cannot see the necessity of so solemn a preparation, and of so imposing a form of appointment, merely to set apart a few "honest" men to collect the charitable donations of the pious. It surely did not require men "full of faith," of "wisdom," and of the "Holy Ghost," to dispense these charitable collections to the poor. If they were men of "honest report," we should think it were sufficient for that purpose. We must, therefore, conclude, that the Apostles appointed them for other purposes, and for more important duties, than the distribution of alms. And we find the fact to be so. We are plainly told, that they exercised the ministerial office, and preached, and baptised. St. Luke states, that Philip, the Deacon, preached;

* During the civil wars in England, the Puritans and Independents corrupted this text, in order to give the people a right to ordain their own pastors. They substituted *ye* for *we*. For this forgery the printer received £1500. See *Grant's Hist. Eng. Church*, iii. p. 224. Lond. 1820. In many of the Bibles printed between 1638 and 1660, particularly the folio edition by Field, this corruption will be found. *Stackhouse's Hist. Bible*, i. p. 1495. See *Scholar Armed*, ii. p. 45. Lond. 1812. A similar corruption was discovered, and noticed in the newspapers of the day, in an edition of the Bible printed some years ago, in one of the eastern States. It is possible that the corrupt text was inadvertently copied from one of the old English Bibles. See *Bishop White's Memoirs of the Church*, p. 310.

^a Acts vi. 1—7.

^a Heb. x. 26—31.

† V. 31.

and that he baptised the Queen of Ethiopia's-treasurer.^b And Stephen, the Deacon, who was "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," was the first martyr for preaching the Gospel of Christ.^c We have the most incontrovertible evidence, that the Deacons did not *usurp* the ministerial character, nor perform acts which did not, of right, appertain to their office. When Philip had converted and baptised the Samaritans, the Apostles Peter and John, went down to Samaria, not to reprimand him for assuming the ministerial office; not to give a valid baptism to his converts, but to *confirm* them by the imposition of hands. That no doubt might remain as to the nature of the office which Philip sustained in the Church, he is significantly called "one of the seven."^d The office of "the seven" was, therefore, ministerial, and not secular. We have here another evidence of an *imparity* in the ministry. Peter and John had authority to perform ecclesiastical acts, essential to the Church of Christ, which Philip could not; therefore an *imparity* in the ministry is established by the practice of the Apostles.

The Scripture furnishes us with further proofs of the ministerial character of Deacons. In St. Paul's charge to Timothy, Bishop of Ephesus, he gives him directions concerning the government of the Church, and the character and attainments of those whom he was to ordain to the sacred office. "These things I write unto thee," says St. Paul, "that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God." The qualifications of the Deacon's office are these: "Likewise," says the Apostle, "must the Deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first

be proved; then let them use the office of a Deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the Deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a Deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree."^e These qualifications are nearly the same as those for Priests.^f Now I would ask, can it possibly be believed, that such qualifications are required in men, merely appointed to collect the charitable offerings of the pious, and to distribute them among the poor? What influence could the character of a man's family, if he himself were honest, have over the mere receiving and paying away of money? What probation could possibly be necessary to acquire the ability to dispense alms? Why was it required of the Deacons to "rule their own houses well," if it was not to prove their ability, after due probation, to rule in the spiritual family of our Lord? What "degree" could a mere collector of alms "purchase to himself" in such employment, by making his collections and distributions faithfully? None that I can perceive. But we can readily perceive, that, if he had faithfully discharged the duties of the lowest order of the sacred office, he might be promoted to another, and an higher, "degree" of the ministry. This likewise proves an *imparity* in the ministry. There is no doubt, it was in relation to their spiritual employment alone, that Deacons were required not to set their mind upon the attainment of worldly riches, but to hold fast the faith delivered to them; to have a pure and unsullied conscience, living a holy life, and making themselves, and their families, living examples of piety and virtue to the people among whom they dwelt, or

^b Acts viii. 5. 12. 26 to end.

^c Acts vi. 5 to end.

^d Acts xxi. 8.

^e 1 Tim. iii. 8—16.

^f 1 Tim. iii. 1—6. Tit. i. 5—10.

were appointed to minister. From this view of the subject we must believe, that Deacons are an order of the ministry, instituted by divine appointment.

They who deny the apostolical origin of the three orders of the Ministry, set aside the order of Deacons as one of these orders, and confound the other two. If our Deacons be not a scriptural order of the ministry, they can have no authority to baptise, either according to the constitution of the Episcopal or Presbyterian Church. For these have explicitly declared, that the authority to baptise belongs solely to the ministerial office, being originally committed by our Lord to his Apostles. "It is not lawful," say Episcopalians, "for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or *ministering the sacraments* in the congregation, before he be *lawfully* called, and *sent* to execute the same."^g "Baptism," say Presbyterians, "is not to be unnecessarily delayed; nor to be administered, in any case, by any private person; but by a minister of Christ, called to be a steward of the mysteries of God."^h Now we may state the case thus: Either the Deacons are Ministers of the Gospel, or they are not. If they be not ministers according to the view of these Churches, they have no authority to baptise. But if they are allowed to baptise, then, according to the constitution of these Churches, they are acknowledged to be lawful ministers of Christ; and thus, two orders of the ministry are recognized; viz. Presbyters and Deacons; for the latter being ordained by the imposition of the Bishop's hands *alone*, it cannot be pretended that they are presbyterially ordained. And I may here remark in concluding this number, that if the laying on of the hands of more than one, be es-

sential to a valid ordination, then there is no valid ministry in the world. Before the fourth Council of Carthage, the Bishop *alone* imposed his hands in ordination in the Latin Church; and in the Greek Church, this practice continues to the present day. Then it follows, that if there was no valid ordination *before* the Council of Carthage, there can be none *since*. In the ordination of Priests in the Church of Rome, the Church of England, and the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, the Priests do not lay on their hands, with the Bishop, to convey spiritual authority, but do it merely in token of their assent. Our Priests, therefore, are not presbyterially ordained; for, according to the understanding of our Church, the Bishop, *alone*, conveys the sacerdotal authority.

A PARISH MINISTER.

For the Gospel Messenger.

ON CHALMER'S SERMONS,

Respecting the Modern Astronomy.

LETTER SECOND.

REFERRING to my last letter,* for the preliminaries necessary to the understanding of this, I shall resume my observations on the assertion of the Infidel, at the place, where I discontinued them. If I have succeeded in showing, that Christianity is silent, as to the religious state of other worlds, and that such silence flows naturally, from its peculiar character, I shall gladly proceed with the argument.

The Infidel (it seems) expects a true Religion, to be the Religion of *other* worlds, besides ours: and that we should be made acquainted with the fact. Let us examine his right to these positions. He does not *know*,

^g Art. XXIII of the Pro. Epis. Church.
^h Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. of A. pp. 467, 468. Phil. 1821.

* Vol. I. p. 309.

that any, much less every one of the worlds seen by the naked or telescopic eye, is inhabited. He can only *presume* so, by analogical reasoning, founded exclusively on physical knowledge, for "star-eyed science" hath been able to teach him nothing of the moral condition of other worlds. If, then, he is justified in concluding from a few general facts of natural philosophy, that the stars and planets are inhabited, are we not entitled to inquire by whom? If he should answer, by beings *in no respect like us*, we conclude irresistibly that a knowledge of their religion could be of no possible advantage to us; that our religion must be exclusively our own, and cannot be expected to convey any intimation as to the character of theirs. But if he reply, that the population of other worlds resembles ours in general features, both physical and moral, in like manner as their habitations resemble ours, we must be allowed the inference, that as they are intelligent beings, they must be moral and accountable, the subjects of duties and affections, probationers in a state of mortality, and heirs of immortality. Their religion, moreover, must be natural or revealed. If natural, it is not perceived that it could have any connexion with Christianity. If revealed, the same inference is obvious, if it did not resemble ours, and if it did, the remarks in my former letter apply; for the mere fact of resemblance cannot, according to human judgment, constitute that species of relation which requires an acquaintance with one part of the system, to be associated with the knowledge and practice of another. But carry the resemblance as far as may be desired. Imagine their dispensation the same as ours. Still no necessary connexion is perceivable, in relation to our religion, as a system of practice. Such knowledge might indeed elevate and expand the mind, but it could have only a weak and transient effect

upon the heart. Why then should religion employ these inferior means, when she has set before us the sublime and lovely spectacle of the adoration and obedience of angels and saints.

We have seen now, that, in whatever light the subject is considered, it is not to be expected, that a religion revealed to us, should contain any view of the moral condition of other worlds. We must, however, answer the infidel, not only in this, but also in the other branch of his position, viz. that a true religion must be the religion of *many* worlds, not merely of *one*; for this is one point of view in which the infidel's argument, judging from his assertion, as stated by Chalmers, may be regarded. It seems unnecessary to examine this part of the subject, at all; because obviously, the moral state of other worlds is immaterial in relation to us; when, whatever it might be, we could not reasonably expect the knowledge of it to be included in a revelation to us. But let us take the argument up, as though it were necessary. If then, on speculative principles, (for we cannot reason from experience,) a true religion must be the standard of government for many worlds, what forbids the conclusion, if others have fallen like ours, that the Christian dispensation has been vouchsafed to them also? The silence of the Gospel, as we have seen, is no argument against the supposition. Now, we have no other religion with which to compare ours, but that of nature, in all its different forms of corruption and superstition, of delusion and imposition. But Christianity excels all these, even in the estimation of infidels, as a system of morals, as a mere republication of the law of nature. It is then the only religion, ever known to mankind, which a discreet, candid, sensible philosopher, could imagine to exist in other worlds. He is not at liberty to launch forth on the restless and boundless ocean of conjec-

ture, in search of an imaginary system. But, if he should, with what materials could he build, save with the facts that he has gathered in our own world; and to what result could they lead, if not to the rejection of every other system, except the Christian? May we not then ask, if it be conceded, that no other such religion has ever been known to man, notwithstanding the utmost efforts of philosophy, in all ages and countries, why should the infidel reject this, as the probable rule for the moral government of other worlds? It has more of the elements of universality, both as respects the nations of this globe, and the entire population of other worlds, than any other system. Its principles are so pure and spiritual, so characterised by simplicity, that were it disembodied of the circumstances, and persons, and events, which impart to it the air of the biography and history of the Prophets and Apostles of this earth only, it would seem a religion adapted to any world, whose inhabitants are intelligent and accountable beings. It appears to me, then, that the infidel can reject the probability, that ours is also the religion of other worlds, for the same reasons only which have induced him to cast it from him, even as the religion of this world.

HIERONYMUS.

For the Gospel Messenger.

SERMON NO. IV.

THE WARNINGS OF NATURE.

PREACHED IN NOVEMBER.

"The Harvest is past, the Summer is ended, and we are not saved."

Jerem. viii. 20.

SUCH was the pathetic lamentation of the Prophet of Israel, bewailing the approaching desolation of his people. The judgment of the Lord hung suspended over them: they had filled up, almost to the brim, the measure

of their iniquities; they had drawn out, nearly to its utmost, the long-suffering patience of their God; they had stopped their stubborn ears to the oft repeated prophetic warnings, and the sword of the relentless Chaldeans was ready to execute the long threatened judgment. The Prophet once more proclaims the dangers of their situation, and calls them to avoid, by a speedy repentance, the approaching calamities; he reminds them of the time which they had already suffered to elapse without improvement, and of the shortness of the period yet remaining for them to escape the impending destruction. Harvest and summer were passed away, yet they had not sought deliverance, by humbling themselves before God, from that devastation which the coming winter might bring upon them. But the prophet pleaded in vain. Stubborn Israel would not listen to his entreaties; they despised the proffered mercies of God, and his vengeance was soon poured out upon them. The Chaldean army invaded their country; Jerusalem was laid in ruins; the temple, the glory of Israel, demolished; and the whole nation carried away into captivity.

It is wise to profit by the errors of others. We may consider the words of the Prophet as addressed, in like manner, to us, and may contemplate in the warning fate of perverse Israel, the picture of our own fearful destiny. We, too, are called to look back upon the harvest and the summer which are gone by, and to inquire of our own hearts if they can yet assure us of our salvation. It was for our use and our instruction that the times and the seasons were appointed. They speak the language of their Creator; and their voice is intelligible to the whole human family; to the whole animate creation. "Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my peo-

ple know not the judgment of the Lord."

Let us proceed to consider the regular changes of the year, first, as they bespeak the constant presence, and unceasing government of their Author; and, secondly, as they are memorials to us of the flight of time, and the consequent lapse of the period of our earthly duration.

I. The succession of the seasons is admirably adapted to display the power and the goodness of God, and to present to man a perpetual memorial of his presence and his government. The face of nature bears, in every part, the impression of his mighty hand, and the excellence of his attributes is engraven in indelible characters on every object that has being. Let us contemplate one of those scenes, which presents the most striking aspects. The stupendous and overwhelming mass of mountains piled on mountains, which, in some parts of the globe, arrest the eyes of the traveller, the immeasurable extent of the prospects over which, from their exalted summits, his sight roves unconfined, the interminable waste of hills, and plains, and forests, dreary with the desolations of winter, or covered with its trackless snows, the profound and impenetrable abyss, from the brink of which he trembles to look down; the vast and craggy rocks, which, from the most elevated point he can attain, still overhang his head, inaccessible to human foot, and hiding their aspiring tops amidst the clouds of heaven; the illimitable expanse of the ocean which, in another quarter, spreads its broad surface to the verge of the horizon, agitated with a restless and everlasting motion; all these present to the spectator a scene of awful grandeur and sublimity, in the contemplation of which, man feels his own insignificance, and the mind, lost in wonder and amazement, raises itself to the throne of that mighty Being by whom the whole was created; it feels that there is a

God; it acknowledges that he is infinite; it bows in humble adoration before him.

But in such a scene as this, the most imposing, the most magnificent that imagination can form, there is still something to be desired, there is still room left for the operation of that Power and that Wisdom which has no limit. An everlasting sameness reigns; one uniform and unvarying monotony pervades the whole. It seems to have existed thus from eternity; it seems destined still to exist, defying the efforts of time, and the revolution of ages, for ever unchanged and the same. If it speaks of the Creator, it seems to say that he has forgotten the works of his hands, to which, by one mighty effort of his power, he had given birth; that having, in some distant age, erected here the memorials of his presence, he had again withdrawn into the centre of his own Infinity, and collected in himself all the emanations of that expansive Being, which he had once spread abroad through the universe. It seems to tell us that God created the world, and then deserted it for ever.

But let us view again the same scene after the interval of a few months. Let us behold it when spring shall have put forth her creative hand, and the magic power of the seasons has passed over it. It is no longer the same. The scene which seemed destined to stand the shock of time, and to remain forever unchanged, has disappeared, and in its place, we behold another which imagination can scarcely recognize to be the same. It seems as if God had again descended from heaven to renew the face of nature; as if he had once more put forth his hand, from that invisible habitation where he dwells in glory unspeakable, by another mighty effort of his power, to give birth to a new creation. Again the mind, lost in admiration, ascends up to that wonderful Being, by whose word the whole was formed. What

but this could have produced a change so astonishing! We feel that he who created, has not forsaken the world; that he still dwells in the midst of his own wonderful works.

Such is the mysterious circle of the seasons. While all creation tells of its Author, and calls on man to confess the wisdom and the power of the Supreme Source of all being, the seasons, in their alternate order, seem more loudly to proclaim his constant presence, and to declare his never ceasing goodness. They rise up in their appointed round, to bear witness, by a testimony unceasingly renewed, to that divine promise which was made at the second creation, when the earth rose up out of the midst of the flood that had overwhelmed it, and began a new existence. Then God said to Noah, "While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease." And they have not ceased; they still continue to speak the praises of their Maker, and to reproach the silence of ungrateful man. "Day uttereth speech unto day, and night sheweth knowledge unto night," that God has not deserted the world which he made, nor man whom he daily fills with his bounty. They have not failed, through all that period, to declare that he upholds the universe by his power, and regulates the year by his goodness; and while the earth remains, they teach us still to expect a continuance of that superintending Providence, by which all things shall be disposed for our welfare.

II. But the seasons, while they thus, in a particular manner, declare the presence and the government of God, and pour out for us, in their turn, the treasures of his goodness, are fitted also to answer another beneficent purpose of his will. They serve, secondly, to mark out by a natural division, the periods of the year, and indicate, by their uniform and equal succession, the progress of time.

The business of life requires the adoption of some such means by which the silent and imperceptible flight of time may be rendered apparent, and its portions distinctly marked. Without some such division of the year, the husbandman would not know when to sow, or when to reap; the business of seed time would encroach on the period of harvest; the duties of one season would press on those of another, and all the concerns of men would be involved in inextricable confusion. To avoid these inconveniences, it has always been found necessary to have certain marks and divisions of time, which might facilitate the arrangements and pursuits of life; and the ingenuity of man could have invented none so admirably adapted to his purposes, as those which the wisdom of the Creator has contrived. He placed in the firmament of heaven those splendid luminaries which diffuse their beams around us; he appointed them "to divide the day from the night, and to be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years;" and he imposed on them those immutable laws, in conformity to which they still continue to wheel their mighty course through the vast expanse. It is by their undeviating circuit that we are enabled to compute days, and months, and years; and to their annual revolutions we owe the ceaseless variety of the seasons, and their unchanging succession; and from these we derive a fixed and permanent standard by which to estimate the flight of time, and to measure the period of our existence. By these we are taught to apportion our daily labour, and our nightly rest, to regulate the business or the pleasures of summer, and of winter, of seed time and harvest. Other standards might be intelligible to the learned, but these are adapted to all, and by these the rudest nations, as well as the most polished, are accustomed to record the history of the past, and to adjust the concerns of the future. In these all the inhabitants

of the earth are taught to behold the hand of the Creator, and by these all are made equally to participate in his bounty.

But we should ill requite the benevolence which is displayed in this wise appointment of times and seasons, did we not derive from it some more important uses than those which are adapted only to our present pleasure and convenience. When God "teaches us to number our days," it is in order "that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." It is, that, knowing the end of our being, and the benevolent purposes for which we are sent into the world, we may strive to employ the short period of our pilgrimage on earth, in doing the will of our Father in heaven. No portion of mankind is left entirely without information on this point; they are all, in a greater or less degree, instructed in the will of their Creator, and taught what are the services which he requires from them. But it is *our* happy lot to possess the knowledge of the will of God, and our own duty, fully and clearly revealed to us by his own inspired messengers. *We* are at no loss to know the end of our being, the purpose for which we are created, and if we do not fulfil it, we shall be required hereafter to answer that neglect by some other plea than that of ignorance of our duty. As we have the word of inspiration to teach us what we ought to do, and to unfold the long prospect of an interminable existence depending upon our conduct, so there is, in the periodical changes of nature, a beneficent memorial of the never ceasing flight of time, destined to recall our wandering thoughts from the transitory objects of present delusion, and to direct them to that last and solemn change, to which we are imperceptibly, but swiftly, hastening with the descending current of life. One year after another performs its hurried round, and each perhaps at its commencement, arrests for a passing moment, our un-

willing attention; we listen to the warning it conveys, we turn a look of regret upon the past, and of flattering hope upon the future; we form the resolutions, and utter the promises of reformation, to be forgotten as soon as they are pronounced. The seasons, in their unfailing order, pass by; each, in its turn, beholds us still lingering in delay, and each, in silent, but impressive language, repeats the monitory call: but they pass by unheeded and unheard, till the mellow evening of the year comes on, the sober period of meditation again returns, and in the falling leaves of autumn we hear the melancholy admonition, "the harvest is past, the summer is ended," and are doomed to make the mournful response, "and we are not saved." If there be any period at which the mind is more disposed to reflection on the passing scene, it must especially feel and confess the influence of that sober season when the year, verging towards its close, begins to put on the sombre garb of winter, and all nature seems to wear her mourning robes in token of approaching desolation. Whatever may be the cause of this influence, its effect has ever been acknowledged, and is sufficiently obvious; and it is the part of wisdom to read in inanimate nature, those lessons of instruction which it seems designed so eloquently to teach. It is a book which the wisest in all ages have studied, and from the perusal of which, the wisest in every age, have risen better and wiser. It is they alone indeed who can read it aright; but it speaks to all; and none who have enough of wisdom to listen with humility to its instruction, will ever apply to it in vain. It is the book of the works of God, wherein his perfections are written; it is an emblem of the life of man, in which his history is depicted. The present season, more than all, invites us to this study, for it exhibits to us that page on which is engraven the picture of human frailty. There

is in the fall of the leaf, and the apparent decay of nature, an emblem of mortality so striking, that the mind finds it impossible to resist the impression of melancholy which it excites, and turns unconsciously its contemplations, to view, in the instructive analogy which it presents, the close of human life. And happy indeed would it be, if in such a view we could trace any resemblance between that emblem, and the object which it represents, beyond the common lot of their frailty. The leaf falls not till all the purposes of nature are fulfilled, when "the harvest is past and the summer is ended:" but man falls in the perfection of his strength, in the vigour of his days, in the midst of his summer: or if he be permitted to reach the appointed autumn of his years, it is only perhaps, to reap the full harvest of guilt, and to fall in the maturity of his crimes. Better then, far better, would it have been, had he been nipped in the early bud, in the blossom of his spring, in the beauty and the innocence of infancy. But happier than all, if he has so learned wisdom as to fill up the measure of his time in the service of his Creator, and is permitted to fall in the autumn of his days, loaded with the fruits of a life well spent, and crowned with the hoary honours of an age of virtue. This is a noble fall: it is an end worthy of the dignity of man. Happy are the few that reach it. But let us not forget, that if to attain an end so honourable, be not in the power of all, *it is* in the power of all to aspire to it, and to make some progress, at least, in the way which leads to it; and though some unseen and unexpected stroke may arrest us in the midst of our path, we shall still earn the meed of an honourable fall, if we are found in the career of duty, and the ways of virtue. To mark out the end of his course, and the point where his journey shall cease, is in the power of none, but *it is* in the power of *each* to choose the path

which he will pursue. But the choice must not be delayed; for the days and years of life pass by with hasty strides, and the last may perhaps arrive before we have taken our resolution. They who desire to advance far in the progress of virtue, must begin early, and continue assiduously to persevere. To reap the harvest of an honourable old age, we must, in the proper season, have sown the seeds of virtue.

That season is to each of us rapidly passing away. Time that makes no pause, is forever addressing us in the alternation of day and night, and the successive language of the seasons; each of them, as it fleets by us, utters its impressive admonition, "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." Spring and summer have already left us, and winter is hastening on again to reproach us with another year of life devoted to guilty indulgence, or lost in culpable delay. Already does mourning autumn strew her faded leaves around us, and whisper in the sighing of the wind, "the harvest is past, the summer is ended." Let us not despise these kind admonitions; but let us rather give way to those instructive meditations, which the annual decay of nature once more suggests to us; let us turn our thoughts to the past, and consider what is the harvest which we have, this parted summer treasured up for the approaching winter of eternity? what are the deeds which we have recorded in the book of life, and laid up for that final day when all men shall be judged according to their works? Let us turn our eyes to the future, and behold the witnesses of the flight of time which nature daily sets before us; let us remember how feeble is our hold on life, and how much we have yet to perform, before we can be prepared for its close; and let us seize, while it can yet be grasped, the swiftly fleeting moment, and make it bless us before it goes. Let these meditations sin-

cerely engage our hearts and our thoughts, and they can scarcely fail, by the grace of God, to bring forth the fruits of virtue in this present life, and to yield us hereafter a blissful harvest, in the world beyond the grave.

For the Gospel Messenger.

DIALOGUE ON PREACHING MORALITY.

No. II.

Two or three days after the conversation formerly related, T. walked past the door of S. and looked in as if he wanted an opportunity to say something. He had been pondering what S. had said, but was so far from being convinced, that he thought he could now quite overthrow his antagonist with the new arguments he had to produce. S. saw him, and asked him to walk in. The invitation being accepted, T. was no sooner seated than he began as follows:

T. I was in too great a hurry the other evening, to give you an answer to what you said about Mr. A——'s preaching: But I wish to ask you one question. Did you not allow that morality was of more importance than doctrine? And if so, how can you justify a man for preaching doctrine so much more than duty? Answer me that.

S. Why, friend T., I did allow, and still allow, that morality, *rightly understood*, is of the first importance, and is the very end of all preaching. But I tried to show you that it included a great deal more than you seemed to think. In my opinion, one must preach doctrine in order to promote morality.

T. You seem to think it is morality to hold the doctrines which you suppose true. It appears to me as if Mr. A. imagined correct notions more valuable than correct practice.

S. It is clear enough that correct notions are necessary in order to cor-

rect practice. A man who thinks it no harm to take advantage of a stranger in a bargain, is not likely to be very honest in practice.

T. That is a point on which few can mistake. He who has wrong notions about honesty, is wilfully mistaken.

S. Very well; but still you see right notions are important in order to right conduct.

T. But when I spoke of doctrinal preaching, as I did on Monday evening, I meant notions, not like this about which all men agree, but about doctrines quite uncertain and unimportant.

S. I know not that Mr. A. preaches any such doctrines. He certainly preaches none but what he supposes God has revealed in his word.

T. He *supposes*: but I suppose differently, and other ministers suppose differently, and all differently from one another.

S. From this difference do you infer, that all truth on important religious subjects is uncertain and unimportant? Or will you grant that God has revealed a way of salvation?

T. I infer that he had better let alone preaching what men cannot agree about.

S. But if God has revealed a way of salvation, it is a matter of the utmost importance. And if he has made such a revelation, it must be one clear and direct thing, however men may differ about it.

T. Take the same text, and you'll find no two preachers make the same out of it.

S. Suppose that to be the case; still it is plain, that God, who spoke that text, meant but one thing, and by that one thing, if it be one of fundamental importance, and we have the opportunity of knowing it, we shall be judged.

T. How, then, come men to differ, if S.S. be so plain as you seem to think?

S. God, certainly, never speaks so ambiguously as to deceive and perplex

his creatures. But how comes a man to think it no harm to take unfair advantages of a stranger?

T. I told you, such a man must be wilfully mistaken.

S. Why should he choose the wrong in this case? Plainly, because he thinks his interest promoted by it. So, in the doctrines of religion, men may wilfully mistake, if they think they can gain by it. If, by any doctrine, a man can quiet conscience in himself, and in others, and so gain popularity, he is certainly tempted to err. And since, among a large class of men, some cannot stand temptation as well as others, it is no wonder that some err. But I must insist, that there is as much certainty in doctrines as in duties; nay, that the certainty of a duty depends very often on the certainty of a doctrine. I have shown this in the plain case of the man who has persuaded himself that it is for his interest to be dishonest. The doctrine he rejects is, that "honesty is always his duty and interest;" and this doctrine, you must allow, is certain, and if not, then he is under no obligation to the duty. So it is in religious doctrines. If it be true that faith is necessary to justification and eternal life, then, from this doctrine which you so much despise, it follows that I am bound to exercise faith, and faith is therefore a duty and a part of morality.

T. Learnedly argued indeed! Why, you are almost equal to parson A. himself.

S. I know not what you may think of the argument, when you have taken time to reflect; but there is one thing which ought for ever to close your lips from blaming Mr. A.'s preaching. Would a man be fit to preach morality to others, who grossly violated it himself, by breaking the most solemn obligations and the most positive vows?

T. He would not, certainly; but what has that to do with the subject?

S. It has just this much to do with

it: Mr. A. considers himself, with every other minister of the gospel, under the most solemn obligations to conscience and to God, and he put himself, at his entrance on the ministry, under the most positive vows, to preach all the revealed will of God, for man's salvation. He promised, with all the solemnity of an oath, that he would declare "the whole counsel of God," including the doctrines revealed, as well as the duties commanded. And here you blame him for doing what his Master in heaven has enjoined on ministers, and what he has solemnly promised to do.

Here S. being suddenly called out, the conversation broke off, and T., taking leave hastily, told S. he would talk more with him on the subject at another time.

Z.

For the Gospel Messenger.

EFFECTS OF INFIDEL WRITINGS.

IN perusing, lately, Benson's Sermons "on Scripture Difficulties," delivered at the Hulsean Lecture, in 1822, I was no less delighted with the purity and elegance of the style, than the conclusiveness of the preacher's argument. It is evidently the work of a master in composition, and the thoughts of a powerful and pious mind. Its subject is deeply interesting to every christian, and highly important to revealed religion. To bring the difficulties of the scriptures, which are the strong holds of infidelity, as internal evidence of the truth of the sacred writings, is an effort of no ordinary kind; and the success of the argument is a triumph worthy of the minister of the cross.

The subjoined extract contains some solemn reflections on the ruinous effects of infidel writings, which deserve universal attention. They are of a character capable of rousing the feelings, and alarming the fears, of every friend to the happiness of socie-

ty; to make him shudder at the evil which the enemies of its peace are pouring upon the moral world; and to urge him to counteract their baneful influence, by all the means in his power. "They have taken a tone of the most positive and abusive disrespect" to the Deity, "and almost refuse any longer to be confined within the regulations of legitimate reasoning, choosing rather to *defy* than to *dispute* with the God of Israel, and to appeal to the *passions* rather than to the *understandings* of mankind."

It is more than probable, that the learned and pious lecturer, in the subjoined extract, had in his view, the writings of the late, licentious Byron, whose lofty and fascinating talents were shamefully employed in debasing moral feeling, and loosening the restraints upon the worst passions of our nature.

I have before me a letter from a friend in London, in which some mention is made of this nobleman. I transcribe his concluding paragraph, merely to show the feelings produced in religious men, by whatever relates to the memory of this unhappy man. "I saw Lord Byron's funeral pomp, as it passed slowly along; and my heart ached within me, when I thought of the evil he had done, and the good which he might have done, with those stupendous powers which he had received from heaven, and, alas! which he employed in defying the very God who gave them."

The same pious friend thus describes the talents of the Hulsean Lecturer: "Mr. Benson has recently been appointed by the Chancellor, (a powerful friend and champion of the Church,) to the living of St. Giles'. I heard him deliver a most admirable discourse a few weeks ago, in style, thought and argument, equal to his lectures. There were some passages in a strain of compressed and powerful eloquence; and some of his remarks struck me as quite original, yet unquestionably just. I could

have listened to him for hours, and my only regret was when his sermon was brought to its close."

F.

There has sprung up, in these degenerate days, a most pernicious class of infidels, who, without deigning, if indeed they were able, to enter into any serious reasoning upon the subject of religion, have been bad and bold enough to adopt all the conclusions of their predecessors as undeniably true. They scorn any longer to argue the case as doubtful, and assuming it as an admitted fact that revelation is incapable of any rational defence, they pour forth the torrent of their abuse in language whose impiety and indecency I dare not repeat. It would be a shame even to speak those things, which these men glory in proclaiming openly to the world; which they utter in the streets, and Courts of Justice, and by which they have insulted the Judges of the land, and would pollute the purity of the female breast. To talk of the "impure morals of the Bible Deity," and to pronounce the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, a God of "cruelty, injustice, deceit, fraud and the worst of human vices,"—such is a specimen of the impieties which they have dared to familiarize to the ears of a Christian people: and as the servant is not greater than his Lord, we cannot wonder, after this, to find them accusing the purest and holiest of God's saints as guilty of iniquities at which nature shudders, and which morality refuses to name. I speak not unadvisedly on this subject. They have been painful hours which I have given to the examination of such writings; but I have given my hours to the task, because it was my duty to do so: and, (thank God and his protecting grace,) the issue has been a conviction of nothing but the desperation of those minds, the corruption of those tastes, and the pitiable ungodliness of those hearts, which could

dare to be so light and lustful in a matter of such unspeakable solemnity. Be it true, or be it false, revelation is always serious itself, and has consequently a right to demand seriousness from others: and it is a mark either of an unsound head or an insincere heart to meet it in the spirit of railing and of ribaldry. Not only, however, do these enemies of the truth revile and speak all manner of evil falsely against the Gospel, but one of their basest and principal efforts is, to pour their calumnies into minds too weak to resist or refute them, and to clothe them in such a fascinating garb, as may captivate the imagination and disturb the impartiality of the reasoning powers. It is to the daughters of our Israel that some specially recommend their impiety and impurity. It is in a form and language which may be level to the means and capacities of the less educated part of the community, that others utter forth their notes of defiance against the God of Israel and his saints: and it is with the charms of poetic numbers, and in all the glowing colours of poetic imagery, that one master spirit has sought to insinuate the poison of doubt and distrust with regard to the mercy and the holiness of David's Lord. Where are the marks of truth or of justice in all this? If men wished to beguile, and deceive, and corrupt, this is the very mode they would pursue. If men wished to turn away the thoughts of their hearers and their readers from the real merits of the question, and set the passions in array against religion, and "make the worse appear the better reason," this is the very course which subtlety would tempt them to adopt. Yet suspicious as their proceedings are, I presume not positively to say, how much of ignorance, or insincerity, or unmingled and unmitigated hatred to godliness is in these men's thoughts. There is one who knoweth, and will judge them in the day of his wrath. Neither know I to what degree of hard-

ness they have grown, nor whether it be yet possible that their consciences may hereafter be stricken with a due sense of the horrible thing they are attempting to work among God's people. But, if it be possible that they should hereafter look upon their present attempts to overthrow the faith of thousands, in that light in which they are now viewed by every Christian of real piety, nay even by every friend of sound morality, it would require a pen more powerful than the best of them can boast, a conception more sublime, and expressions more energetic than the noblest of their leaders owns, to estimate the load of unavailing and irremediable regret which will weigh down their minds in the day of their penitence, and hasten their gray hairs into a sorrowful grave. There is something in the nature of intellectual and literary iniquity which makes it impossible to obviate its dreadful effects. If I oppress the weak by my power, by my power I can again repay him for his sufferings. If by dishonesty I rise to wealth, I can obliterate by liberality, when I repent, the greater part of the evil consequences of the wrong I have done. But the characters of impiety or impurity which my hand has once traced and sent forth into the world, no tears can wash out, no penitence can recall. Like Pilate, what the unbeliever "has written, he has written," and he cannot, if he would, either undo the deed, or frustrate its effects. The Spirit of the Lord may come upon the infidel writer, and bring his heart into a great and godly sorrow for his sin. He may weep in holy penitence over his past unbelief, and through a renewal of faith be made again a partaker of the graces of redemption and sanctification unto his own eternal glory. But all his hope and assurance of salvation for his own soul in the world to come, will never be able to take away the fearful forebodings he must entertain of the incalculable evil which his

sceptical and ungodly writings may have inflicted upon the souls of others in the world that now is. Let the man of genius who has perverted his talents be never so repentant for the abuse of his talents, and never so certain of having his pardon sealed to him through the blood of Jesus, still he will feel, and feel wretched when he thinks, that he has been guilty of a crime beyond his abilities to repair. That is, a worm which can never die. For the invention of printing has given such strength, and swiftness, and stability to the thoughts and words of mankind, that when once our opinions have been subjected to the operations of the press, they are withdrawn for ever from our grasp, and will work the work for which they were originally sent forth, in defiance of all our efforts to blot them out. Nay, our very efforts to recall the writings we have condemned will but, in many instances, have a tendency to increase their circulation, by more effectually stimulating the passions of the corrupt, the interests of trade, and the curiosity of the inquisitive, to preserve and study what the author seems so anxious to destroy. Whatever then may be the views with which these unbelieving and ungodly writers have promulgated their rebukes and blasphemies against the religion of the Son of God, whether they be deceiving or only deceived, they have done an evil which no subsequent exertions of their pen or their penitence can ever obliterate. Their souls, it is possible, may yet, if they repent and turn to the Lord in faith, be saved; but it is impossible, even if their souls be saved, that their consciences should not, through life, be irremediably grieved by the melancholy reflection, that they have been preparing a mental poison for which their feebleness can administer no certain antidote, and mingling a cup of bitterness for generations yet unborn. In that conviction they must die. By the anguish of that reflection must

their last hours be embittered, and they must quit the earth and its inhabitants conscious that they have sown the seeds of infidelity, and eternal death, in many an unwary and unstable soul.

For the Gospel Messenger.

A DISSERTATION ON THE PENTATEUCH,
Or
FIVE BOOKS OF MOSES.

(Continued from page 365, Vol. I.)

MOST of the facts related in the Pentateuch, happened under the eye of Moses himself: they are events of which he was the witness, and almost always the minister: the others happened before his time; but he had two ways to ascertain himself of them, tradition and revelation. Levi, his great grandfather, lived for some time with Isaac, Isaac with Shem the son of Noah, Shem with Methuselah, Methuselah with Adam; and the tradition preserved in the hands of these five or six persons, bore characters of authenticity and truth so singular and so striking, that it could not be suspected. We observe in the Books of Moses various things which relate to futurity, which did not happen till after his death, and which some pretend that he never could write. But, either these are prophecies, and in that case the pretence is absurd, or they are historical facts; and then I would ask, what is the nature of them? What are these additions about which so much stir has been made? To what do they relate? Does any capital fact appear to have been inserted in the Pentateuch, which was not there originally, and from whence it may be inferred, that the Pentateuch cannot be the work of Moses? Nothing less: perhaps it is the name of a city, which has been changed with time; and so rectified; perhaps it is a date which hath been fixed, or an historical circumstance thrown in to make the narrative more complete.

Some few notes added by a very ancient hand, since we find them in the Samaritan copy just the same as in the Hebrew; or else, some additions and slight corrections, for which we are indebted to Esdras, and which concern only a very few passages; some of which, however, may very possibly have been written by Moses himself. And upon this foundation it is, that some cry out, as if the work was forged after the events: though surely they must have little honour or honesty, who can reason in this manner.

Once more, we would ask, who could have dared to attempt this falsification of the Pentateuch? When could the design have been formed? Where could it have been executed? Here we see most of the observations made above, to prove the Pentateuch to be the work of Moses, recur of themselves, and with new force. The authenticity of these books once allowed, there is no receding from it; we must grant the falsification of them to have been always impossible. The jealousy of the tribes, whose interests were, in some respects, so different, and even so opposite; the vigilance of the Prophets, and the zeal of the Levites, the devotion of the people, the hypocrisy of some, the piety of others; every thing, in short, would have occurred to discover the fraud, and to prevent its going unpunished. Let it further be observed, that if the Pentateuch was falsified, this must necessarily have happened either before or after the schism of the ten tribes. Before, it was impossible; no one would have dared to attempt it under the eyes of David or of Solomon; or, if it had been done, Jeroboam, the first King of the revolted tribes, would not have failed to exaggerate this attempt, out of hatred to the family of those two monarchs, whose sworn enemy he was. Less still could the Pentateuch have been altered in a period prior to Solomon, to David, to Saul, or Samuel; for the

further you go back to the age of Moses, the more impracticable will the alteration of his writings be found.

But, to understand the force of this proof, it is necessary to trace the matter up higher. Of the books of the Old Testament, the Samaritans receive only the five books of Moses; they have the Pentateuch, therefore, and they have it in old Phenician characters, which were those of the Hebrews till the Babylonish captivity; the same in which both the books of the Pentateuch were written; and all the others of sacred scripture, till the time of Esdras, who put them into Chaldee characters. Several of the Fathers, and of the ancient christian writers, have quoted the Samaritan Pentateuch. From the sixteenth century, the original itself was wholly forgotten, till the beginning of the last century, when Scaliger having heard it reported that the Samaritans of the Fast still had this Pentateuch, he lamented the misfortune of christians, in that no one thought of bringing a copy of it into Europe. Soon after, Archbishop Usher procured several copies from the East. There are no disputes concerning the origin of this Pentateuch. Some assert, that it is only a copy made from a transcript of Esdras; and, in support of their opinion, they urge the following reasons: that it hath all the interpolations of Esdras's edition; of which Esdras himself is commonly thought to be the author; so that if the Samaritan Pentateuch was more ancient, they could not have happened. If those Israelites who were left at Samaria, after the transportation of the ten tribes, had no copy of the Law of Moses, would they have received one from the hands of their enemies, the Jews? Would they not have preferred the making an inquiry for some copy of it in Assyria, amongst their brethren, who had been banished thither, and who could not fail to be furnished with it? These and many other considerations, seem natu-

rally to lead to this conclusion, that the Samaritans received their Pentateuch from the Israelites, their ancestors, and not from the Jews, ancient or modern. Consequently, the Samaritan text and the Hebrew are only, strictly speaking, two copies of one and the same original. As, therefore, these copies, agreeing with each other, have been extant ever since the schism of the Samaritans, and ever since the revolt of the ten tribes, it was utterly impossible for the Jews to falsify their Pentateuch; and we run no hazard in confidently maintaining, that they have not altered it.

When Moses wrote the Pentateuch, of which we have thus shown him to be the undoubted author, is a question which can be resolved by conjecture only; we will, however, give the best solution of it we can, in the brief account subjoined, concerning each of the five books of the Pentateuch. But before we come to this, it may be proper just to observe, that this whole Pentateuch, which originally composed only one historical work, containing the history of the people of God, from the creation of the universe to the year of the world 2553, was afterwards divided into forty-four sections. Several Jews consider this division as one of the injunctions of Moses upon Mount Sinai; others, with more probability, attribute it to Esdras. These sections were, nearly about the same time, divided into several verses, distinguished by points. Rabbi Nathan put numbers to these verses in 1445; but before him Cardinal Hugo de St. Clair, who died in 1262, and was author of the first Concordance to the Bible that ever appeared, had divided the Old and New Testament into several chapters, as it is at present. The Jews, therefore, borrowed from the Christians this division into chapters; and the Christians borrowed from them the division into verses; both of which have contributed to render the editions of the Old Testament, in some

respects, more commodious for common use than they were before. Robert Stephens introduced the division of verses into the New Testament. The utility of these divisions, at their first appearance, gained universal approbation; and though it is certain, as we shall have frequent occasion to remark in the course of our annotations, that they are sometimes very improperly made, yet they are, for the most part, judicious enough.

The first book of Moses, which the Hebrews call *Bereshith* "in the beginning," is by the Greeks called *Genesis*, that is, "the origin or generation of all things;" because it contains, first, the history of the creation of the world, and then the genealogy of the Patriarchs, from Adam, the first man, down to the sons and grandsons of Jacob. The book well deserves, upon every account, to be placed not only at the head of the Pentateuch, but also of the whole sacred code; for nothing can be more grand, more interesting, more useful, than its subjects. The providence of God shines forth in it in an admirable manner, and his august perfections are every where most strikingly remarkable. Nor is its design less interesting than the subjects whereof it treats: it is intended to imprint strongly upon the minds of men, the persuasion of the unity of a God, the Creator and Preserver of the universe. It is to nourish in their hearts the expectation of a deliverer, ordained for the redemption of the human race, in order to withdraw men, and the Hebrews more especially, from idolatry; to dispose them submissively to observe the laws which Moses enjoined them, and to animate them to march boldly to the conquest of a country, which the Lord had so solemnly promised to their forefathers. Hence it is that Moses expatiates so little upon the history of foreign nations, and on the contrary, enters so minutely upon the genealogy, the fortunes and revolutions of the glorious ancestors of

the people whose leader he was. No other introduction could so well have suited what follows in the Pentateuch; no other frontispiece could have figured so well at the head of that magnificent performance.

Some have supposed that the Genesis was not composed till after the publication of the Law; a conclusion which, amongst other things, seems plainly deducible from the several passages in the book itself, where the author appears manifestly to allude to customs consecrated by the law. It must, however, be confessed, that this proof is not unanswerable; for the sanctification of the Sabbath, and the distinction of animals, which are the two customs principally in view, were prior to the law. We do not apprehend, therefore, that any thing more certain can be said respecting the date of Genesis. Moses inspires admiration, by the sublime manner in which he treats of divine subjects: he imprints terror by the vehemence and force of his expressions; he excites the love of virtue, and the hatred of vice, by his paintings of both; he astonishes by the strength of his menaces; he gives courage by the sweetness of his consolations; he communicates ardour by that divine flame with which he is filled. In short, it may be said, that there are no books more calculated than his to persuade the understanding, and to move the heart; and what is no less admirable in that eloquence which is peculiar to them, is, that it is always proportioned to the persons and the subjects. It were easy to add here various things respecting the chronology of Moses, with regard to the form of the days, months and years which he uses; but this detail belongs rather to those authors who have explained the Hebrew chronology and antiquities in separate treatises. We shall, therefore, only observe, that according to the calculation which Moses has given us of the duration of the deluge, the Hebrew year consisted of three

hundred and sixty-five days; and began with the month Tisri, that is, about the seventeenth of our October. The learned have proved that it was regulated upon this footing, from the beginning down to the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt, as the reader may be convinced by consulting Archbishop Usher.

(To be continued.)

From Ackerman's Repository.

DESULTORY REMARKS ON THE ARRIVAL AND CELEBRATION OF NATAL DAYS.

How various are the feelings excited in the human mind, by the arrival of a birth day! In infancy, to be sure, it is not properly understood; but the effect and impressions of a birth day in very early life are, nevertheless, well remembered, and often with a sensation, approaching to bitterness, by the adult, the middle-aged, and the old. When surrounded, perhaps, by a splendid party; when all that wealth can purchase loads and decorates a man's table; when music, vocal and instrumental, strives to lull his senses; when beauty and friendship appear to unite to make his birth day a happy one: yet, how often does the person thus attended by all that the world would deem desirable, look back with envy to his humbler boyhood; to the simple additional plumb pudding, or apple pie, and to the invitation of two or three cousins, or school-fellows, that alone marked his natal day! And why is this? Not because he is a bad man; not because he is in want, for the very reverse of want is probably his situation; not because he is without a friend, for he may have many, rare as they certainly are: but because his life is in the wane; because age has begun to blanch his hair, and to rob him of his faculties and enjoyments, he looks back to the brightness and beauty of

all that early youth presented to him; to the remembered hour when he wished to be older, much older than he was, that he might become a *man*: now alas! he is an old man!

The case I have put is that of an old man, but not a guilty one. To the tainted mind in advanced age, the coming of a birth day must be, perhaps, the most hateful thing that can be imagined. Willingly would such a being forget that he had ever been young, innocent and happy; willingly would he cease to remember that a fond father and mother had bent over his infant form, and breathed a prayer to heaven for his welfare and happiness, when the youthful anniversary of his birth returned. Then his hopes and feelings were buoyant: he looked forward himself with anxious hope to the completion of their prayers; but now, on looking back, he either beholds a wretched void, where good might have been done, but was neglected; or he sees every vanity of crime, and wrong, fill up the melancholy space of his departed years! He hears the groans and sighs of the widow and the orphan, whom he has injured; the execrations of the wronged and ruined friend, or the dying shrieks of some fond woman, who trusted to his honour, but to perish: what can, what ought to be such a man's feelings on his birth day? Just what they are, depend upon it. He has that within which can and will tell him of all the injuries he has done, with deep and desolate aggravation.

There is something very delightful in witnessing the careless and happy feeling which pervades the youthful mind on a birth day. Surrounded by friends, (young and old,) all of whom are wishing health, happiness and success to the beginner of life; he thinks of little beyond the enjoyment of the moment; or if he does, it is, perhaps, only to wish for another such celebration and day of jollity and mirth, unknowing that the time

will too soon arrive, when he may either wish his years to be stationary, or that they could travel back with him to youth and youthful pleasures.

"When first our scanty years are told,
It seems like pastime to grow old:
And as youth counts the shining links
That time around him binds so fast,
Pleased with the task, he little thinks
How hard that chain will press at last."

There have been men, egotistical and vain enough to boast in old age, that were their time to come over again, they would live and act just as they had lived and acted: but I apprehend that the number of such boasters is very small. Generally speaking, men only regret that they cannot live over their days again, that they might be able to act very differently from what they had done. Who is there among us, that has not something to mourn over: time wasted, love spurned, good counsel neglected, talents misapplied, wrong desires cherished; or some such thing, even though it may be very short of direct crime, yet enough to make them sorry they have not time allowed for reparation? Men with feelings such as these, are apt to exclaim with the poet,

"Oh give me back those joyous hours,
When life's gay path was deck'd with
 flow'rs,
And grief was but a name,
And I'll relinquish all the joys
That manhood boasts; they teem with
 noise,
And oft are fraught with shame.

Not so the pleasures boyhood knew:
On wings of bliss the moments flew,
The blood with rapture tingled;
And never with the smile of joy,
To fill the breast with base alloy,
The pang of sorrow mingled."

A man about the middle of life is, perhaps, if happily married, and with a few children, the most placid and calm on his birth day: he is not too old to enjoy the gaieties allowed to his friends, his offspring and his servants on that day; neither is he old enough to be melancholy and peevish

at the lapse of time: he has "love's true light to guide him" through this vale of trouble and of tears; he is happy "in that dear home, that saving ark," which keeps man from the overwhelming turbulence of the floods of sin and passion that the world is too full of. For when all without is darkness and tempest, he can turn to that one bosom, which will shelter him to the best of its ability, and hush his wounded spirits into peace.

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For the Gospel Messenger.

ON THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST.

THE subjoined letter is from the "Bee," a literary work published in Edinburgh, in 1796. It is there stated to have been copied "from a MS. in Lord Kelly's Library, which had been transcribed from the original letter of *Publius Lentulus*, at Rome." If we could persuade ourselves, that this letter was really written by the Roman President, it would be read with considerable interest: that it might have been so written, is by no means impossible.

A SUBSCRIBER.

"It being the usual custom of the Roman Governors to advise the Senate and people of such material things as happened in their respective provinces, *Publius Lentulus* being President of Judea, in the days of the Emperor *Tiberias Cæsar*, wrote the following epistle to the Senate, concerning the person of Jesus Christ:

"There appeared in these our days, a man of great virtue, named *Jesus Christ*, who is yet living among us, and of the Gentiles, is accepted for a prophet of truth; but his own disciples call him the Son of God. He raiseth the dead, and cureth all manner of diseases. A man of stature somewhat tall and comely, with a very reverend countenance, such as the beholders may both love and fear; his hair of the colour of a chesnut fully ripe, plain to his ears, whence downward it is more orient, curling,

and waving about his shoulders. In the midst of his head is a seam or partition of his hair, after the manner of the Nazarites; his forehead plain and very delicate; his face without spot or wrinkle, beautified with a lovely red; his nose and mouth so formed as that nothing can be reprehended; his beard thick, and of the colour of his hair, not very long, but forked; his look innocent and matured; his eyes gray, clear and quick; in reproving, terrible; in admonishing courteous; in speaking, very modest and wise; in proportion of body, well shaped. None have seen him laugh, but many have seen him weep; a man for his singular beauty surpassing the children of men."

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For the Gospel Messenger.

METAPHYSICAL DIVINITY.

THE following judicious and striking remark, appears in the review of Stuart, on Atonement, in the Gospel Advocate for October:

"The peculiarities of the Calvinistic theology, have always kept alive that philosophizing spirit which seeks to penetrate into the secrets of the Almighty, and which exalts human reason above its proper level, and renders it unwilling to admit facts for which it cannot account, and therefore weakens that implicit faith with which we ought always to receive the simple declarations of our religion. We do not mean to charge our orthodox brethren with consequences which we know must well excite their horror; but it does appear to us that Unitarianism is the reaction of that bold philosophizing spirit which occupied itself in speculations on the nature and operations of the divine mind, till it became bewildered in a labyrinth of its own formation. The fact that Unitarianism is most prevalent in those communions which have entered most fearlessly into this metaphysical theology, affords to our minds satisfactory evidence," &c.

From the Christian Remembrancer.

The Book of the Church. By Robert Southey, Esq. LL. D. Poet Laureate, Honorary Member of the Royal Spanish Academy of History, of the Royal Institute of the Netherlands, of the Cymmrodorion, of the Massachusetts Historical Society, of the American Antiquarian Society, of the Royal Irish Academy, of the Bristol Philosophical and Literary Society, &c. In two volumes, 8vo. 11. 4s. Murray. 1824.

THE whole of the early part of this work, which gives an account of the religion of the ancient Britons and Anglo-Saxons, would admit of very considerable abridgment, which we venture to recommend, not with a view to shortening the book, but in order that room may be gained for a more particular account of later periods, in which a livelier interest is naturally felt. For the same reason, we should advise the compression of the fifth chapter, which is principally taken up with a minute account of the Scandinavian Mythology, as it is set forth in the Edda.

The causes which promoted the success of Christianity amongst the Anglo-Saxons, are thus ably stated in the fourth chapter:

"In regarding the triumph of Christianity among the Anglo-Saxons, a natural inquiry arises why it should have been so easily established, and with so little struggle, seeing that its introduction into heathen countries has, in later centuries, been found so exceedingly difficult, as at one time to be generally considered hopeless, and almost impossible without a miracle. This striking difference is to be explained by the very different circumstances under which all recent attempts had been undertaken, and the different character of the false faiths against which they were directed.

"The paganism of our Saxon ancestors was not rooted in their history, nor intimately connected with their institutions and manners; it had no hold upon the reason, the imagi-

nation, or the feelings of the people. It appealed to no records, or inspired founders: in its forms, it was poor and unimpressive; there was nothing useful or consolatory in its tenets; and whatever strength it derived from local superstitions, was lost by transplantation; for the conquerors, when they settled in Britain, were cut off from those sacred places in their native land which they had regarded with hereditary reverence. Such a religion, without pomp and without pretensions, had nothing which could be opposed to Christianity. On the other hand, the Christian missionaries came with the loftiest claims, and with no mean display of worldly dignity. They appeared not as unprotected, humble, and indigent adventurers, whose sole reliance was upon the compassion of those whom they offered to instruct; but as members of that body by which arts and learning were exclusively possessed—a body enjoying the highest consideration and the highest influence throughout all the Christian kingdoms: they came as accredited messengers from the head of that body, and from that city, which, though no longer the seat of empire, was still the heart of the European world; for wheresoever the Christian religion had extended itself in the west, Rome was already a more sacred name than it had ever been in the height of its power.

"The missionaries therefore appeared with a character of superiority, their claim to which was not to be disputed. They spake as men having authority. They appealed to their books for the history of the faith which they taught: and for the truth of its great doctrines, they appealed to that inward evidence which the heart of man bears in the sense of its own frailties, and infirmities, and wants. They offered an universal instead of a local religion; a clear and coherent system instead of a mass of unconnected fancies; an assured

and unquestionable faith for vague and unsettled notions, which had neither foundation nor support. The errors and fables with which Romish Christianity was debased, in no degree impeded its effect; gross as they were, it is even probable that they rendered it more acceptable to a rude and ignorant people—a people standing as much in need of rites and ceremonies, of tangible forms, and a visible dispensation, as the Jews themselves when the law was promulgated. The missionaries also possessed in themselves a strength beyond what they derived from their cause, and from the adventitious circumstances that favoured them. They were the prime spirits of the age, trained in the most perfect school of discipline, steady in purpose, politic in contrivance, little scrupulous concerning the measures which they employed, because they were persuaded that any measures were justifiable, if they conduced to bring about the good end which was their aim. This principle led to abominable consequences among their successors, but they themselves had no sinister views; they were men of the loftiest minds, and ennobled by the highest and holiest motives; their sole object in life was to increase the number of the blessed, and extend the kingdom of their Saviour, by communicating to their fellow-creatures the appointed means of salvation; and elevated as they were above all worldly hopes and fears, they were ready to lay down their lives in the performance of this duty, sure by that sacrifice of obtaining crowns in heaven and altars upon earth, as their reward." Vol. I. p. 51.

Mr. Southey remarks, that one consequence of the union of all Christendom under one spiritual head was, that the intellectual intercommunion of nations, was far greater at that time than it is now; and that probably more English, in proportion to the population of the country, went into

Italy, for the purposes of devotion, than have ever since been led thither by curiosity and fashion, and the desire of improvement. Indeed, considering the imperfect state of nautical science in those ages, and the dangers and difficulties of land travelling, one is surprised to find how frequently, and with how little demur, journeys were undertaken to Rome by vast numbers both of the clergy and laity.

The following account of the first establishment of a regular church government in this country, is just and clear:

"The church government established in this island by Augustine and his fellow-labourers, was that episcopal form which had prevailed among the Britons, and which was derived from the Apostles in uninterrupted descent. The diocesses were originally of the same extent as the respective kingdoms of the Heptarchy; the clergy resided with the Bishop, and itinerated through the diocess, preaching at a cross in the open air. There was no public provision for erecting churches and endowing them; these things might in those ages safely be left to individual munificence and piety. Cathedrals and monasteries were built, and lands settled upon them, by royal founders and benefactors; and their estates were augmented by private grants, often given as an atonement for crimes, but unquestionably far more often from the pure impulse of devotion. Beside these endowments, tithes, the institution of which was regarded not as merely political and temporary, but as of moral and perpetual obligation, were paid by those who became Christians, the converts taking upon themselves, with the other obligations of their new religion, this payment, which was universal throughout Christendom. The full predial tithe was intended; the smaller ones were at first voluntary oblations, and the whole was received into a common fund, for the fourfold

purpose of supporting the clergy, repairing the churches, relieving the poor, and entertaining the pilgrim and the stranger. The distribution was left to the Bishop and his assistants. Such was the practice of the Anglo-Saxon, as it seems to have been, of the British church." Vol. I. p. 79.

"The cathedral was at first the only, and long continued to be the Mother Church, so called because there it was that believers received their second birth in baptism, the rites of baptism and burial appertaining to the cathedral alone. The first subordinate houses of worship were chapels, or oratories, as humble as the means of the founder, erected by the itinerant clergy, in situations where the numbers and piety of the people, and their distance from the cathedral, made it desirable that they should be provided with a place for assembling, in a climate where field worship could not be performed during the greater part of the year. Parochial churches were subsequently founded by those who desired the benefit of a resident priest for their vassals and themselves; and thus the limits of the estate became those of the parish. These churches were at first regarded as chapels of ease to the cathedral, and the officiating minister, as being the Bishop's curate, was appointed by him, and removable at his pleasure; this dependence was gradually loosened, till at length the priest was held to possess a legal right in his benefice; and Theodore, to encourage the building of churches, vested the patronage of them in the founder and his heirs. The tithes of the parish were then naturally appropriated to its own church. A certain portion of glebe was added, enough to supply the incumbent with those necessities of life which were not to be purchased in those times, and could not conveniently be received from his parishioners in kind, but not enough to engage him in the business

of agriculture; his pursuits, it was justly deemed, ought to be of a higher nature, and his time more worthily employed for himself and others. Without the allotment of a house and glebe, no church could be legally consecrated. The endowment of a full tenth was liberal, but not too large; the greater part of the country was then in forest and waste land, and the quantity of produce no where more than was consumed in the immediate vicinity, for agriculture was no where pursued in the spirit of trade. The parochial priest kept a register of his poor parishioners, which he called over at the church door from time to time, and distributed relief to them according to his means, and their individual necessities. But in that stage of society, the poor were not numerous, except after some visitation of war, in which the minister suffered with his flock; while villanage and domestic slavery existed, pauperism, except from the consequences of hostile inroads, must have been almost unknown. The cost of hospitality was far greater than that of relieving the poor. The manse, like the monastery, was placed beside the highway, or on the edge of some wide common, for the convenience of the pilgrim and the stranger.

"The ecclesiastical government was modelled in many respects upon the established forms of civil policy; and, as among the Anglo-Saxons, the tithing-men exercised a salutary superintendence over every ten *friborgs*, so, in the church, Deans, who were called Urban, or Rural, according as their jurisdiction lay in the city or country, were appointed to superintend a certain number of parishes. At first they were elected by the clergy of the district, subject to the Bishop's approval: the Bishops subsequently assumed the power of appointing and removing them, and sometimes delegated to them an episcopal jurisdiction, in which case they

were denominated *Chorepiscopi*, or Rural Bishops. They held monthly chapters, corresponding to the courts-baron, and quarterly ones, which were more fully attended. The clergy of the deanery were bound to attend and present all irregularities committed in their respective parishes, as also to answer any complaints which might be brought against themselves. At these chapters, all business which now belongs to the ecclesiastical courts was originally transacted, personal suits were adjusted, and wholesome discipline enforced, by suspending the offending clergy from their functions, the laymen from the sacraments. But as society became more complicated, and the hierarchy more ambitious, these ancient and most useful courts were discountenanced, and finally disused." Vol. I. p. 82.

(To be continued.)

Miscellaneous Intelligence.

Manuscript Discoveries.—The following is a list of the principal rescript manuscript discoveries which had been made previous to the recent ones of Angelo Mai: 1. Parts of the New Testament, recovered by Kuser and Wetstein, from a MS. of the sixth or seventh century, in the Royal Library at Paris. 2. Portions of the Epistles to the Romans, translated by Ulphilas, Bishop of Gothland, in the fourth century, found, with other fragments, by Francis Augustus Knittel, in 1755. 3. A part of the ninth Book of Livy, discovered in the Vatican Library, in 1773, by P. J. Bruns. 4. The Gospel of St. Matthew, recovered from a rescript MS. in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin, in 1801, by the Rev. J. Barrett, D. D.

The Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia, was held at

Staunton on the 20th, 21st and 22d May, 1824.

It was composed of the Bishop, (Dr. Moore,) 13 clergy, and 16 lay delegates.

The whole number of clergy in this Diocese are 34.

The parochial reports furnish the following aggregate:

Baptisms, 390; Marriages, 65; Funerals, 196; Communicants, 432. Of the baptisms, 38 were of coloured persons.

The Annual Convention of the Church in the Diocese of Connecticut, was held at Litchfield on the 2d and 3d of June, 1824. Present the Bishop, (Dr. Brownell,) 28 Presbyters, 3 Deacons, and 34 lay delegates, representing 29 parishes. From the address of the Bishop it appears, four persons have been admitted to the holy order of Priests, six to that of Deacons, five received as candidates for orders, and 106 confirmed. The following extracts will be read with satisfaction and advantage:

"Since our last meeting, the new church in the parish of New-Preston, town of Washington, has been completed. On the 14th of October last, it was dedicated to the most high God, with the prescribed rites and solemnities, by the name of St. Andrew's Church. The occasion excited a lively interest, and drew together a large concourse of people; among whom were thirteen of the clergy of our Church. This new edifice, thus consecrated to the worship of God, does great credit to the zeal and liberality of the people of the parish. It is constructed of durable materials, and in the Gothic style of architecture. The interior is well finished and conveniently arranged, and the decorations of the pulpit, desk and chancel, are handsome and appropriate. The congregation of New-Preston is not large, nor wealthy, yet the spirit with which they are animated, has enabled

them to erect this church within a very short period, and to pay for it entirely from their own resources. Some may perhaps have spared from their exigences, yet it is believed that they are far from feeling impoverished by their exertions, and they may have a religious trust, that what they have thus 'lent unto the Lord,' will be repaid in blessings upon themselves and their posterity.

"The new church in Salisbury is now nearly finished, and ready for consecration; and the church in which we are at present assembled, having recently passed under the finishing hand, and become complete in all that relates to the decent celebration of divine worship,* will to-morrow, by divine permission, be solemnly dedicated to the service of God."

"At our last meeting, I had the pleasure of congratulating you on the passage of an act, by the general assembly of this state, for the establishment of a college, to be under the patronage and principal direction of members of our Church, provided thirty thousand dollars should be raised for its endowment by private contribution. I have now the satisfaction of announcing to you, that more than the requisite sum has been raised to render the charter available. Nearly *fifty thousand dollars* have been subscribed to this object, within the diocese; the greater portion of which has been contributed by the city of Hartford, in which the institution is established. The college will be organized and go into operation without delay. Arrangements have been made for procuring a library and suitable philosophical apparatus, and preparations are in train for erecting the necessary buildings for the accommodation of students, and for public rooms. Though these edifices can hardly be completed before the next spring, yet it is purposed to

be ready for the reception of students the ensuing autumn, and, in the mean time, to procure accommodation for them in private families.

It will be the object of the trustees of the institution, to seek the ablest professors that can be obtained, in order to ensure the requisite number of students to support the establishment. It is hoped also, that the organization of the institution will be thought to contain some improvements on the ordinary systems of education, calculated to procure for it the favourable notice of the public.

My brethren of the clergy,

In concluding this address, suffer me to add a few words intended more particularly for yourselves. It is salutary to employ occasions like the present, to encourage each other in our several ministries, and "to provoke one another unto love and to good works."

We are stewards of the manifold grace of God; and "it is required of stewards that they be found faithful." It is required of us that we "preach the word of God in season, and out of season;" that we rebuke and exhort, admonish and correct. It is required of us that we "feed the people with knowledge and understanding;" that we visit the sick, comfort the afflicted, and *keep ourselves unspotted from the world*. It is required of us, as dispensers of the mysteries of the kingdom, that we minister the holy sacraments with reverence and awe; with righteous measures, and abundant charity; always bearing in mind the compassionate words of our Saviour to St. Peter, "If thou lovest me, *feed my sheep*; if thou hast any love to me, *feed my lambs*." Let us constantly bear in remembrance our high responsibility; and let us realize that the eye of God watches over us by day and by night, and observes whether we faithfully watch over our flocks, as they that must give an account.

There is nothing in the circum-

* A liberal individual, Col. — Marsh, has recently presented to this church a very excellent organ.

stances of the times to justify a relaxation of our vigilance. Our Church is assailed by enemies, and beset by errors on every side. It is peculiarly incumbent on us that we be careful to set forth her distinctive doctrines, and guard her fold from the errors with which she is surrounded. Every error, and every abuse of religion, tends to infidelity. The true religion itself is identified with them by the unthinking, and the whole is indiscriminately rejected. Among the prevailing errors of the day, you cannot fail to have observed the pernicious effects of *universalism*, of *fatalism*, and of *fanaticism*. The denial of all future punishment, relaxes the morality of the Gospel, rejects its most awful sanction, and gives the reins to every licentious passion. The doctrine that all the thoughts and actions of men, are precisely fixed and determined by an eternal necessity, destroys all sense of accountability, and leaves men to the sole guidance of their own corrupt propensities. And a fanatical reliance upon imaginary revelations and impulses, supersedes and sets aside the revelation which God has given us in his Gospel. Thus do these errors create a tendency to infidelity in those that embrace them; while by being held up to the world as a part of the Christian system, they produce in the minds of the unreflecting a strong prejudice against the truth of Christianity itself. It is true, indeed, that in some of the scenes of the late French revolution, the world has received such a lesson upon the effects of infidelity as should not be soon forgotten; yet though disgraced, it has not ceased to exist; and its principles are so congenial to the corruptions of the heart, so flattering to human pride, and so pleasing to the natural love of novelty, that they cannot be too strongly deprecated, or too strictly guarded against.

It is our part and duty, my brethren, to guard ourselves and our flocks against the prevailing errors of the

times; to exhibit Christianity as it is in the Gospel; and to see that its real spirit and temper be wrought in our own hearts.

“And may God, of his mercy, grant unto us all, to be so faithful and so wise, so blessed and so assisted, that we may convert many souls as seals of our ministry, and give an account of our respective charges with joy, to the glory of God, and the salvation of our own souls, in that day, when the great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls shall come to judgment, even our Lord Jesus Christ; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour, and glory, love and obedience, now and for ever more. Amen.”

The parochial reports furnish the following aggregate: Baptisms (adults 27, children 213, not specified 268) 508; Marriages 215; Funerals 263; Sunday Scholars 565; Communicants 2809.

The forty-first Convention of the Church in the diocese of New-Jersey, was held in the city of Trenton, on the 18th and 19th August, 1824. There were present the Bishop, (Dr. Croes,) 11 Presbyters, 1 Deacon, and 20 Lay-Delegates. The Parochial reports give the following result: Marriages 38; Baptisms 152; Burials 109; Communicants 704. The Bishop's Address to the Convention contains the following interesting paragraphs:

“I attended the annual meeting of the Trustees of the General Theological Seminary of our Church, in New-York, and the examination of the students of that institution.

“I state it, with confidence, when I say, that no unprejudiced person, in any tolerable degree qualified to judge, attended the examination of the students of that institution, without being powerfully impressed with the truth, that the Seminary is one of high desert; that its professors are gentlemen well qualified for their sta-

tions, both as it respects their learning, aptness to teach, suavity of manners and devotion to the work, and to the interests of the Seminary; and that the students exhibited undeniable evidence, not only of the care, the skill, and the accuracy, with which they had been taught; but also of the industry they had exercised, and the high attainments they had made in every branch of Theological knowledge.

"Can such an institution be neglected by any member, or portion of members, of our Church? Can it be suffered to want sufficient funds for its support, and therefore be checked in its progress, or permitted to decline? It must not be: Churchmen cannot be so indifferent to the well being and progress of their religion; they cannot subject themselves to such severe reproach."

"It will be perceived, that the Church in this Diocese, by the blessing of its Divine Head, is gradually improving. More clergymen belong to it, and officiate in it, than at any former period; consequently many churches heretofore vacant, have stated divine service, and the ministration of the word and ordinances. If we compare the state of the Church in this Diocese, as it was reported in 1814, (and in no previous period, since the revolution, had it been materially better,) with its state at this time, we shall see a manifest progress in all its concerns, a progress greater than we could reasonably have expected, considering the difficulties with which it has had to struggle. At that time, its number of clergymen was eight, now it is sixteen; and in the course of a few days will be seventeen, besides the partial services it will receive from two clergymen of the neighbouring Dioceses. Then the number of churches which enjoyed the stated services of the Sanctuary was ten, now twenty or twenty-one congregations are blessed with that great privilege. Of twenty-

six churches, (one of which has been erected within the last year,) several have either been re-built, improved, or new modelled since that time; so that, with the exception of one, they are all in excellent repair. To supply the still vacant churches, a Missionary is appointed, who will be able to afford them frequent services.

"With this increase of the means for the visible prosperity of the Church, we may reasonably indulge the hope, that, through the influence of divine grace, her spiritual interests are also advancing; that true and undefiled religion is making progress in the hearts of her members; the only certain evidence of which is a good life and conversation.

"For all these blessings, it becomes us, my brethren, to raise our hearts, in grateful acknowledgments to Almighty God; and they should, at the same time, inspire us with new zeal and exertions, in the promotion of His glory."

The Convention of the Church in the Eastern Diocese, was held at Portland, Maine, on the 29th September, 1824. It was composed of the Bishop, (Dr. Griswold,) 9 clerical and 4 lay Delegates. The Bishop's address has not come to hand.

The General Theological Seminary.—The exercises of this institution commenced, after the annual vacation, on the 1st of November, 1824. The opening address was delivered in Trinity Church, by the Rev. Benjamin T. Onderdonk, Professor of the nature, ministry and polity of the Church. The number of students is 25. We understand that Gulian C. Verplank, Esq. the Professor of Moral Science, &c. has been elected one of the representatives of the city of New-York, in Congress. His presence at Washington will not probably be required until next winter, and we trust, that even then; his valuable services may, by some convenient ar-

rangement, be secured to our Seminary. The work which he has just published, entitled "Essays on the nature and uses of the various evidences of Revealed Religion," is, we believe, the substance of the lectures on that subject, which he gave to his class. We hope we may be indulged in the remark, that, while this work reflects great credit on our Seminary, it does equal honour to the head and the heart of its honourable author.

It appears that our brethren in Maryland are pursuing active measures in behalf of the Seminary. The Bishop (Dr. Kemp) has issued a Circular, from which we make the following extracts:

"To remedy the evil arising from the high price of board, the citizens of New-York are raising funds for the purpose of erecting buildings on the lots presented by Mr. Clement C. Moore, and in the course of next summer, it is confidently expected that the buildings will be finished, so that students may be accommodated with board at the low rate of \$80 per annum."

"From a report made to the Trustees at their last meeting, it appears that the ordinary expenditures of the Seminary are \$5,300, from which, deducting the interest on the permanent fund, amounting to \$4,818, there is left an annual deficiency of \$482. To place the institution on a sure foundation—to provide for the comfortable support of at least four salaried professors, which will be necessary as the plan of operations becomes extended—to increase the library—to assist promising but indigent young men, in the prosecution of their studies, &c. &c. it is supposed that not less than \$5,000 will be required annually, the interest of a sum which might easily be collected among those Episcopalians throughout the United States, who have not yet been called upon, if they would

feel that interest in the welfare of public religious institutions, which their character as Churchmen demands; and of which they have bright examples in communions less wealthy than their own. The scholarships already established are the following:

1. The "*Warren Scholarship*," founded by Eliakim Warren, of Troy, New-York, \$2,000
2. The "*Bishop White*" do.—by Ladies of Philadelphia, 2,500
3. The "*N. Carolina Fund*," for the support of indigent Students, amounting to more than 7,000
4. The "*Bishop Dehon Scholarship*," founded by Ladies of Charleston, S. Carolina, amounting to at least 2,500
5. The "*Bishop Hobart*" do.—by gentlemen of Geneva, N. York, 2,000
6. The "*Bishop Croes*" do.—by Convention of N. Jersey, 2,000

In order to correct some misrepresentations which have been circulated respecting the sentiments of the Bishops of North-Carolina and of the Eastern Diocess, it is deemed advisable to print the testimonials received by the agent from those gentlemen.

"To the Members of the Church in the Eastern Diocess.

"Understanding that an agent of the General Theological Seminary is soon to make a journey through this Diocess, for the purpose of soliciting aid and collecting funds for the use of the said Seminary, and for promoting the pious objects of its institution, I hereby freely give my approbation of such a collection, and cordially commend the patronage of the Seminary to the friends of the Episcopal Church.

"ALEXANDER V. GRISWOLD,
Bishop of the Eastern Diocess.

"Bristol, Sept. 3d, 1824."

Extracts of Letters received from Bishop Ravenscroft.

"I look on the General Seminary as the cementing principle of the Church in this wide-spread, speculative country; and the more I think on the '*tout ensemble*,' the more convinced I am, that nothing else can save us from all the mischiefs of sectional theology and fanatical delusion." "Every day, and the many little passing circumstances which come under my notice, convince me more and more, that it is to be considered as our sheet anchor. It has been said, and truly said, that from the heterogeneous nature of our population, we have no *national character* in the proper sense of these words. This applies with equal strength to our religious condition in general. It applies particularly to the Church, in the only just meaning of the word. And to produce this essential character, the Seminary must be cherished. From one root unity and uniformity may proceed. From two or more roots, nothing but *division* can grow. And in this unformed, extended and incipient country, nothing, in my opinion, can save us from variance and **ULTIMATE SEVERANCE**, but the inculcation of *one fixed and unvarying system* of tuition for those who have to teach others."

Extract of a letter from a gentleman in London to one of the Editors.

"When I was at Margate, I became acquainted with the Rev. Dr. Bailey, the Rector of that parish; a man of sterling worth and talents. He was the Chaplain to the House of Commons, and is some connexion of the Archbishop of Canterbury. He delighted me by speaking in terms of

warm praise of the Sermons of our late excellent Bishop, [Dr. Dehon,] as noble and sound discourses; and I have reason to believe, that they are valued and admired by all competent judges."

EPISCOPAL ACTS.

ORDINATIONS.

By the Right Rev. Dr. Bowen, Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South-Carolina. On Sunday the 28th Nov. 1824, in St. Helena Church, Beaufort, Mr. Edward Neufville, of Prince William's Parish, was admitted to the holy order of Deacons.

—On Friday, the 10th Dec. 1824, in St. Philip's Church, Charleston, Mr. George W. Hathaway, of Cheraw, was admitted to the holy order of Deacons.

By the Right Rev. Dr. Croes, Bishop of the P. E. C. in New-Jersey, acting for Bishop Hobart, who is absent. On Sunday, October 10th, 1824, in Grace Church, New-York, Mr. Henry J. Whitehouse was admitted to the holy order of Deacons.

—On Monday, Oct. 11, 1824, in St. Luke's Church, New-York, the Rev. Cornelius R. Duffie, Deacon, was admitted to the holy order of Priests.

—On Wednesday, the 10th Nov. 1824, in St. Peter's Church, Amboy, Mr. Joseph Peirson was admitted to the holy order of Deacons.

CONSECRATION.

By the Right Rev. Dr. Bowen, Bishop of the P. E. C. in South-Carolina. On Sunday, the 5th Dec. 1824, the new Parish Church, in St. Luke's Parish, was solemnly consecrated to the Christian worship of Almighty God.

CALENDAR

FOR JANUARY, 1825.

1. The Circumcision of Christ.
2. The Second Sunday after Christmas.
6. The Feast of the Epiphany.
9. First Sunday after Epiphany.
16. Second Sunday after Epiphany.
23. Third Sunday after Epiphany.
25. Conversion of St. Paul.
30. Septuagesima Sunday.

DIOCESS OF SOUTH-CAROLINA. January 1st, 1825.

THE 37th Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in this Diocese, will be held on Wednesday, the 16th day of February next, in St. Michael's Church, Charleston. The Clergy entitled to seats, and the Lay-Delegates of Parishes and Churches, are requested to attend. Divine Service will commence at half past 16 o'clock.

FREDERICK DALCHO, *Secretary of Convention.*